

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 150

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0305

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PDEV, PGOV, PP

SUBJECT: RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN PNG

1. PORT MORESBY'S 246 DESCRIBED DEVELOPMENTS LEADING TO PARTIAL INFORMAL RESTRUCTURING OF THE POLITICAL FORCES IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY AND SUBSEQUENT DEBATE ON THE NEW CONSTITUTION HAS WITNESSED A HIGH DEGREE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE GOVT AND THE OPPOSITION SYMBOLIZED BY THE PASSAGE OF A MODERATE SET OF CITIZENSHIP PROPOSALS WHICH IN CERTAIN INSTANCES ALLOW PROVISIONAL CITIZENSHIP FOR WHITES.

2. BEING CONSISTENTLY OUTVOTED IN THE HOUSE THE MORE NATIONALISTIC (SOME WOULD SAY RADICAL) MEMBERS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE FACTION HAVE SOUGHT TO BRING THE DEBATE TO THE PUBLIC, PRESUMABLY IN ORDER TO BRING PRESSURE ON THE GOVT. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF "A NEW ACTION GROUP FOR FREEDOM" ON OCTOBER 8 FORMALIZED THESE ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE THE VENUE OF THE DEBATE FROM THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY TO THE STREETS. THE GROUP, ORGANIZED BY A SMALL CADRE OF PNG NATIONALS WITH PUBLIC SERVICE BACKGROUNDS HELD A RALLY ON THE 12TH WHERE SPEACHES CALLED FOR  
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THE OVERTHROW OF THE SOMARE GOVERNMENT AND THE ESTABLISH-

MENT OF A TRULY "BLACK" GOVERNMENT LED BY EX-MINISTER  
FOR JUSTICE JOHN KAPUTIN.

3. THE GROUP STATES THAT IT IS NOT A POLITICAL PARTY  
BUT CALLS UPON THE PUBLIC TO SUPPORT THE CAUSE  
OF LIBERATING PNG FROM FOREIGN DOMINATION. ITS PROGRAM  
IS TO INFORM THE PUBLIC ABOUT VARIOUS ISSUES THAT WILL  
DEPRIVE BLACK PAPUA NEW GUINEANS OF THEIR DIGNITY,  
INTEGRITY, AND IDENTITY. THEY FEAR THAT THE SOMARE  
GOVT HAS SOLD OUT PNG BY PROVIDING PROVISIONAL CITIZENSHIP  
FOR WHITES. THEY ARE WILLING TO ONLY ALLOW MIXED RACE  
TO HOLD PROVISIONAL CITIZENSHIP.

4. SIMON KAUMI, SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, AND CHAIRMAN  
OF THE NEW GROUP ALLEGEDLY SHOUTED OUT "DOWN WITH THE  
COALITION GOVERNMENT - UP WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT" DURING  
THE DEMONSTRATION. JOHN KAPUTIN GAVE A FIERY SPEECH  
(THEY USUALLY ARE) CRITICIZING THE CITIZENSHIP PROPOSALS  
PASSED BY THE HOUSE AND CALLED UPON THOSE WHO WANTED TO  
GET RID OF SOMARE "TO ACT NOW" BUT NO ACTION  
WAS TAKEN.

5. ALTOGETHER THE RALLY WAS A SMALL TIME AFFAIR,  
WITH AN ATTENDANCE OF FROM TWO TO THREE HUNDRED,  
MOSTLY STUDENTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PNG.  
BUT KAUMI EVIDENTLY TOLD THE DEMONSTRATORS THAT THE  
MARCH WAS ONLY THE FIRST OF A SERIES PLANNED TO  
FRUSTRATE THE COALITION GOVT.

6. AS A RESULT OF THESE ACTIVITIES KAUMI WAS SUSPENDED  
FROM OFFICE ON THE 14TH BY THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD,  
PENDING AN INVESTIGATION. THREATS OF A STRIKE BY  
HIS SUPPORTERS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE WERE MET BY AN  
ANNOUNCEMENT BY OTHER PUBLIC SERVICE MEMBERS THAT THEY  
SUPPORTED THE SOMARE GOVT. TWO DAYS LATER THE HOUSE OF  
ASSEMBLY BY 52 TO 12 VOTED TO TERMINATE JOHN KAPUTIN'S  
MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENT (AGAIN DEMONSTRATING THE POWER OF  
THE GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION BLOC) WITH THE CHIEF MINISTER  
STATING THAT KAPUTIN WAS BEING REMOVED FOR POOR PAST  
PERFORMANCE, FAILURE TO ACCEPT A NEW PORTFOLIO WHILE  
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DRAWING A MINISTER'S SALARY, AND FOR PUBLICALLY  
CRITICIZING THE GOVERNMENT'S CITIZENSHIP PROPOSALS.  
KAPUTIN MADE HIS REPLY IN THE HOUSE ON THE 17TH STATING  
HE HAD BEEN CONDEMNED WITHOUT A FAIR TRIAL.  
BUT ONE IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF HIS DISMISSAL IS THAT HE  
AND TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MATUANGAN ASSOCIATION  
HAVE ACCORDING TO THE PRESS ANNOUNCED THEIR WITH-  
DRAWAL FROM THE COALITION.

7. OCT 17 STATEMENT OF NEW ACTION GROUP MEMBER  
JACOB LEMEKI, SECRETARY OF PUBLIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION  
IS THAT HE NOW PREPARED TO ADVOCATE VIOLENCE AGAINST  
THE PEOPLE WHO ARE NOW CONTROLLING THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY.  
CITED CITIZENSHIP ISSUE AS ONLY REAL CRITICISM OF THE  
GOVERNMENT.

8. COMMENT: COMARE'S NORMAL REACTION TO CONFRONTATION IS TO  
SEEK COMPROMISE, AND IN COMPROMISING HE HAS PROBABLY  
INVITED NEW PRESSURES. HIS COMPROMISES WITH  
THE UNITED PARTY OPPOSITION WILL CONTINUE TO INVITE  
CRITICISM FROM THE MORE NATIONALISTIC ELEMENTS BOTH  
WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT.

9. WHEN SOMARE RESISTS RADICAL PRESSURES, AS HE DID  
ON THE CITIZENSHIP ISSUE, HE WON IN THE HOUSE OF  
ASSEMBLY BUT NOW FINDS THAT THE RADICALS ARE TRANS-  
FERRING THE DEBATE TO STREETS. THE CPC FACTION MAY  
BE ATTEMPTING TO USE THE SAME TACTICS AS THOSE  
WHICH PROVED SUCCESSFUL IN RABAUAL IN THE 1968-70 PERIOD,  
WHERE BOYCOTT, STRIKE AND DEMONSTRATION WERE THE TOOLS  
USED TO PARALYZE THE GAZELLE MULTI-RACIAL COUNCIL.  
INDEED KAPUTIN'S DISMISSAL MAY RESULT IN TEMPORARY  
UNREST IN THE GAZELLE NOW. THIS COULD EVENTUALLY  
PRESENT SOMARE WITH NEW AND UNPALATABLE CHOICES:  
A CRACKDOWN OR A BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER.

10. STILL THE OUTCOME MAY NOT BE AS FAVORABLE AS  
THE NATIONALISTS WOULD HOPE. THE NEW AGREEMENT WITH  
BOUGAINVILLE COPPER INDICATES SOMARE'S ATTENTION TO AND  
SUCCESS IN PROMOTING PNG INTERESTS. HE IS FULLY  
CAPABLE OF MAKING HIGHLY NATIONALISTIC STATEMENTS  
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HIMSELF. FURTHER, HE HAS ACHIEVED A STATUS WHICH  
MAY PROVE DIFFICULT TO UNDERMINE, AS THE MOST PROMINENT  
INDIVIDUAL IN A SUCCESSFUL INTERIM GOVERNMENT WHICH  
IS EXPECTED SOON TO LEAD PNG TO INDEPENDENCE.  
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